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GERSCHENKRON'S PERSPECTIVE ON BACKWARDNESS AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CAPACITY FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION IN COASTAL FISHERIES

by

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Gerschenkron's perspective on backwardness and the role of government and nongovernmental organizations in the development of local capacity for collective action in coastal fisheries

Gideon P. Carnaje and Auraleen Mae S. Harina*

1. Introduction

The critical question confronting research on the role of government and nongovernmental organizations¹ in natural resource management is the extent to which government and nongovernmental organizations can shape, or are inevitably shaped by, the society of which they are a part. If the critical question has to do with the possibilities of, and limitations on, action by government and nongovernmental organizations within the social context, it is obvious that a variety of situations need to be examined. It may be that the relationships will not yield to model building and hypothesis testing and can only be examined historically, country by country.² Certainly the differences among countries strike one as forcibly as the similarities.

This paper argues that the insights on patterns of economic development by the economic historian Alexander Gerschenkron can be useful in examining comparatively the differences in the role of government and nongovernmental organizations across societies and in relation to the development of local capacity for collective action in coastal fisheries. Gerschenkron's outstanding intellectual legacy lie in his own studies of nineteenth century European industrialization but the heuristic framework of analysis of differences rather than similarities in the process of modernization which he developed will continue to provide insights not only into patterns of economic development and but also into patterns of natural resource management across a wide spectrum of societies and time periods as well.

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¹ The World Bank's Operational Directive 14.70, define nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as private organizations "characterized primarily by humanitarian or cooperative, rather than commercial, objectives . . . that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development" in developing countries (Werker and Faisal, 2008).

² Models are particularly useful in puzzling out the various assumptions that we often need even to derive what seems like an intuitively obvious conclusion, and in deciphering unifying principles connecting seemingly unrelated case studies. But the world of institutional and political economy in the context of natural resource management is full of ambiguities, contextual nuances and multi-dimensional complexity, which at our current state of empirical knowledge are extremely difficult to capture with exercises in model building or hypothesis testing. Thus the treatment in this paper is discursive and the arguments try to provide an analytical narrative.

Gerschenkron (1962) provided a famous discussion of the opportunities and difficulties of “economic backwardness.”³ He suggested that backward countries could achieve a take-off into very rapid growth if they could substitute for “missing prerequisites,” in particular a lack of “entrepreneurship.”

Gerschenkron’s works on development from conditions of economic backwardness still deserve to be read and insights derived from his works might usefully be used to shed light on the direction, problems and constraints associated with coastal fisheries management in the Philippines as strategies to develop local capacity for collective action in coastal fisheries bear strong resemblance in many cases to Gerschenkron’s recipe: substitute for “missing prerequisites.”

The following section elaborates on Gerschenkron’s idea that relative backwardness influences the character of economic development and the role played by “substitutes” in its promotion. The insights of Gerschenkron are then used to shed light on the role of the government and nongovernmental organizations in the development of local capacity for collective action in coastal fisheries. It draws upon a review of existing literature on coastal fisheries management in Japan and the Philippines.⁴ We focus on the literature that attempts to synthesize theoretical as well as empirical findings, rather than individual case studies. In the last section we present the conclusion and areas for future research.

2. The Gerschenkronian Paradigm

Early researches on European industrialization identified important factors for the British industrialization and attempt to find when and how those factors emerged in the latecomers like Germany and Russia. For instance, if they think private entrepreneurs and the emergence of a free market were responsible for the British industrialization, they try to investigate the formation of these

³ Gerschenkron’s hypothesis first took form in a 1951 essay entitled “Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective,” later published in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. The essay gave its name to his volume of essays published by Harvard University Press in 1962.

⁴ Japanese coastal fisheries management regimes have frequently been referred to as examples of successful community-based fisheries management (Pinkerton and Weinstein, 1995) or co-management which involves sharing of authority and decision making by communities and government agencies (Jentoft, 1989; Pomeroy and Berkes, 1997). The Philippines is the country with the greatest number of fisheries community-based management and co-management projects in the world (Pomeroy, 2003). While the term “coastal fisheries” is being used in Japan, the Philippine fisheries are generally divided into three sectors: aquaculture and municipal and commercial fisheries. This study takes “municipal fisheries” as the operational equivalent of “coastal fisheries” in the Philippine setting. The term municipal fisheries refers to fishing that utilizes boats of three gross ton (GT) or less or uses gear not requiring the use of boat. Municipal fishing areas include not only streams, lakes, and tidal waters within the municipality but also marine waters within three nautical miles of the municipal coastline. Both marine and freshwater (inland) fishing are classified as municipal fisheries and are roughly equivalent to artisanal, small-scale or traditional fisheries (Lim et al., 1995a).

'prerequisites' in other countries. The highest profile contribution of the early years was Rostow's stage theory of economic growth and, in particular, his notion of "the take-off into self-sustained growth," first set out in an article (Rostow, 1956) and then in a short book (Rostow, 1960). The idea was of a linear progression to an advanced economy through five stages of which take-off was the third following "the traditional society" and "pre-conditions for take-off." The paradigm case was Britain and other countries were portrayed as following in Britain's footsteps.

Gerschenkron's analysis rejected the English Industrial Revolution as the normal pattern of industrial development and noted that a different logic operated in the individual countries. There were no equivalent stages of economic growth in all participants. Apparently disadvantageous initial conditions of access to capital could be overcome through new institutional arrangements.

Gerschenkron (1962) suggested that certain characteristics of development during a country's initial period of industrialization, can be better understood if reference is made to that country's degree of relative backwardness just prior to industrialization.⁵ Referring to the European countries which began their rapid industrialization during the nineteenth century, Gerschenkron stated, among others, that relatively backward "follower" countries, by responding to the pressure generated by their relative backwardness, will be forced to make substitutions for missing preconditions that will accelerate the process of industrialization; the greater a country's relative backwardness on the eve of its industrialization, the greater the need for that country to find substitutes for the institutions which the backward country lacks, and thus the greater was the role played by special institutional factors designed to speed industrialization. He suggested that the level of backwardness at the onset of industrialization tended to be associated with "organized direction" of industrial development: the most backward were dominated by state activity. In advanced Britain, for example, capital accumulation and financial intermediation took place through the institutions of self-finance and a dispersed financial network. But in moderately backward Germany and extremely backward Russia capital accumulation and financial intermediation took place through the great industrial banks and the state. Thus in Germany the large banks and in Russia the state were "substitutes" for the entrepreneurial and financial facilities found in England.

It might be true that markets, i.e., a common factor across countries, expanded in the latecomers with their economic development. But Gerschenkron understands that the differences were more important than the commonalities in the industrialization of the individual countries and builds his model upon these differences. And he introduces 'degree of backwardness' as a concept

⁵ Gerschenkron's hypothesis first took form in a 1951 essay entitled "Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective," later published in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. The essay gave its name to his volume of essays published by Harvard University Press in 1962.

explaining this diversity in a consistent manner. Relative backwardness engenders "tension" between a nation's present and potential state of development. This tension is revealed to the dominant elite and reinforced by invidious comparisons with other nations that have forged ahead. Once tension has built up and the leaders of a country are bent on catching up, the absence of traditional "prerequisites," such as Walt Rostow emphasizes, does not represent an insuperable obstacle to development. If they are not already present, these prerequisites will often be generated in the course of development. The important thing is to bolster institutions capable of taking the place of the missing ingredients until they are ready to make their appearance.

Overall, Gerschenkron's backwardness perspective can be interpreted to suggest that optimal institutional arrangements may be different in early and more mature phases of economic development. This might be construed in terms of modern microeconomics. Ronald Coase warned against an economics that ignores the "richness of the institutional alternatives between which we choose" (Coase, 1992 p. 718). Part of what Coase (1960) showed was that, for some problems, there is no legal rule, no form of regulation, that will generate a fully efficient solution. He thus anticipated public choice economists, such as James Buchanan, in arguing that the real choice was not between an inefficient market and an efficient government solution but rather among a variety of inefficient alternatives, private and governmental.

The study of what constitutes appropriate institutions⁶ for different societies has led to the emergence of the field of "new comparative economics." The new comparative economics as proposed by Djankov et al. (2003) argues that one must consider a variety of institutions and their respective social costs, including legal systems and cultural characteristics, when evaluating different institutional designs. A corollary of this result is that reforms in each country must be evaluated relative to its own institutional opportunities, rather than some idealized benchmark of perfect government and markets. In particular, government interventions that are appropriate in richer countries, which have high levels of public accountability and transparency, may be inappropriate for the less developed economies.

The most useful component, however, of Gerschenkron's account is his concept of "substitutes for prerequisites" in which he stressed that backwardness entailed the absence of factors that served as preconditions for development in more advanced countries and highlighted the importance of examining the ways in

⁶ Viewed broadly, an *institution* is "a system of rules, beliefs, norms, and organizations that together generate a regularity of (social) behavior" (Greif 2006:30). De Dios (2008:1) notes that this definition of Greif amplifies the definition by North (1990) of institutions as "rules of the game," and of organizations as players of the game. The distinction highlights the point that rules must often be sanctioned or implemented by organizations, notably those involved in the political and legal system. Viewed at this fundamental level, *governance* itself—understood as "the means by which order is accomplished in a relation in which potential conflict threatens to undo or upset opportunities to realize mutual gains," (Williamson 1998:76)—must be understood as being itself an institutional outcome.

which, in conditions of backwardness, substitutions for the absent factors were achieved (1962, p. 46). Harley (1991) suggested that this might largely be construed as the endogenous substitution of hierarchies for markets in backward areas as the transactions costs analysis of Williamson (1985) suggests would be appropriate. This would account for the greater role of large firms and bureaucracies in circumstances where markets were less well-developed, and the transaction specificity of assets thus intensified, with greater attendant risks of opportunistic hold-up deterring investment and innovation.

The possibility that Gerschenkron can be construed in terms of modern microeconomics does not, however, mean that his underlying view of the role of the state in the development process is acceptable. On the contrary, it appears to be too sanguine about the dangers of government failure and there is too little special attention to the domestic classes and interests seeking to control the interventionist state. Nevertheless, a clear message that derives from Gerschenkron and does still appear to be valid is that economies that develop from backwardness will probably go through the early stages of development with institutional configurations that look quite different from those of, say, the United States and Japan and that optimal arrangements will alter as development progresses.

3. The trend towards devolution of fisheries management

The widespread failure of government-led efforts to manage coastal and aquatic resources has led to the view that management authority should be devolved from government agency to the community of resource users. Fishers' organizations are seen as the appropriate vehicles for expanded management authority at the community level (McCay, 1980). Jentoft (1989, pp. 147-148) has identified certain advantages and also possible problems with the notion of investing fishers' organizations with an enhanced role in fisheries management. The key advantage is that fisheries regulations are likely to have greater legitimacy among fishers if the fishers themselves, through their community-based organizations, have had a hand in shaping the fishery regulations.⁷

⁷ The current emphasis on user groups and local management as an alternative to state control over natural resources has its roots in both academic studies and policy pressures. From the late 1970s on, there has been an increasing number of field studies of user-managed resource systems, which suggested that government management was not the only (nor even always the best) option. Since the mid-1980s there has been greater attention to management of common pool resources in the theoretical literature (e.g. Runge 1986; Ostrom 1990; Bromley 1992). These studies have argued that local management by users does not necessarily lead to a "tragedy of commons," provided there are effective local organizations. On the policy side there has been a growing awareness of the performance deficiencies of many government agencies in managing resources at the local level. The fiscal crisis of the state, combined with structural adjustment programs, have created pressures to reduce subsidies to agencies, and look for alternatives. Devolving management responsibility to local organizations has therefore been seen as increasingly attractive.

It is generally considered that the longest-standing realization of the notion of investing fishers' organizations with an enhanced role in fisheries management is the system of fisheries cooperative associations (FCAs) in Japan. The FCAs are not simply fishing organizations. Rather, they are holders of the rights and administrative organizations. Their primary objective is the optimal use of resources and equal opportunity for member fishermen. The FCAs, as the legal fishing rights holders, are the central formal organization in management. For example, an FCA is responsible for writing a management plan for each of the fishing rights it holds and having the plan ratified by the general membership and approved by the appropriate Sea Area Fisheries Regulatory Commissions.

Despite the fact that management regimes involving cooperation or collective action among the individuals are regarded less likely to succeed in general, there are many successful cases of coastal fishery management in Japan. Naturally, Japan's experience has attracted much attention among those concerned with coastal fisheries management. Since the early 1980s increasing attention has been paid to Japanese fisheries management by international organizations for its potential value in guiding reform of the seemingly intractable problem that plague fisheries globally (Pinkerton and Weinstein, 1995). To a large extent the community-based fisheries management or co-management initiatives in developing countries have been designed with the "norm" of Japanese coastal fisheries management system in mind. Most of these initiatives have been launched in developing countries, such as the Philippines and Thailand.

Can other nations replicate the Japanese success by placing the stamp of national law on allocation decisions made at the local level by a fisher's cooperative? It is quite likely that comparisons with the evolution that proceeded in Japan would throw into relief some significant factors in coastal fisheries management history in the Philippines which otherwise could not have been easily perceived.

Programs to devolve natural resource management are generally based on the assumption that resource users will take on the roles formerly assigned to the state.⁸ This requires some form of collective action to coordinate individuals' activities.⁹ Collective action which is sustained over time usually includes rules

⁸ The process of devolution of fisheries management involves programs that shift responsibility and authority from the state to non-governmental bodies. Devolution programs go by a range of names. When control over resources is transferred more or less completely to local user groups, it is often referred to as community-based fisheries management (Pinkerton and Weinstein, 1995). In these cases, the government generally withdraws from a role, and either cuts or redeploys agency staff. When the state retains a large role in resource management, in conjunction with an expanded role for users, it may be referred to as joint management or co-management (Jentoft, 1989; Pomeroy and Berkes, 1997). However, these are often not clear-cut, with most cases involving some form of interaction between the state and user groups.⁸

⁹ The problem of collective action has captivated social scientists for decades. Ever since Mancur Olson (1971) argued that self-interested individuals were unlikely to cooperate voluntarily to capture joint benefits, scholars have studied and theorized ways in which groups might avoid this collective action dilemma. Recently, much of this work has taken place in the context of environmental policy, where a

and decision-making structures. In the case of natural resource management, this might include rules on using (or refraining from using) a resource, as well as processes for monitoring, sanctioning, and dispute resolution (Ostrom 1992). Note that collective action does not necessarily require an organization, although organizations may make collective action more effective or efficient for some tasks (Meinzen-Dick, Raju, and Gulati 2000).

In Japan, high levels of local collective mobilization have their roots in community customary law and formal laws of the feudal era.¹⁰ In the feudal period, coastal villages that did not have enough arable land to grow rice were the only communities allowed to fish. For these villages, fishing was the only source of their livelihood and they were given specified areas of nearshore coastal water for their exclusive use. To protect these areas against outside poachers, fishermen's groups formed guilds and the feudal lords granted territorial fishery rights to village guilds and encouraged the guilds to work out solutions among themselves. In 1948, the Fishery Cooperative Law transformed the guilds into FCAs, and granted them status to represent user groups within the TURFs.¹¹

Although examples of effective self-governing institutions for resource management can be found in Japan coastal fisheries, they are not found everywhere. Few if any coastal communities can draw upon medieval practices in gaining the right to management of local resources, as did the Japanese coastal communities after World War II (Weber and Iudicello, 2005). In the Philippines, "customary" resource management institutions have long since weakened or disappeared in the face of technological change and outside political and economic forces.¹² Moreover, the very notion of a single, identifiable "community" for "community-based resource management" may be a fallacy in Philippine coastal fisheries where users are from diverse social backgrounds and economic position (Eder, 2005).

Thus, experience from the Philippines has shown that fishers have difficulty in organizing themselves for collective action. In reviewing the Philippine community-based management and co-management projects, Carlos and

wave of voluntary collaborative efforts known variously as civic environmentalism (John 1994), grassroots ecosystem management (Weber 2003), or collaborative watershed management (Lubell 2004) is taking place despite many barriers to collective action that may exist.

¹⁰ The historical details of FCAs and Territorial Use Rights Fisheries (TURFs) evolution have been documented in the literature (e.g. Asada et al. 1983; Ruddle 1987; Yamamoto 1995; Lim et al. 1995b); here we present them briefly.

¹¹ Cases where management is conducted on a territorial basis and groups hold exclusive fishing rights can be found in other parts of the world, but only a few cases are like Japan's, where such rights and territorial management are systematized and supported by national law (Jentoft 1989; Feeny et al. 1990).

¹² The historical existence of traditional fishing rights and village-based management systems in the Philippines and how traditional authority and rights were superseded by municipal government control of local fishing grounds have been documented in the literature (e.g. Kalagayan, 1991; Lopez (1985); Russell and Alexander 2000:38; Heinan and Gonzales, 1993). This is not to say that traditional community-based resource management systems, and informal fisheries rights and rules systems do not exist, for localized examples can be found throughout the country (Ferrer, 1989; Mangahas, 1994).

Pomeroy (1996) found that fishers take action on their own initiative to organize and develop institutional arrangements (rights and rules) in less than 20 percent of the cases and that community organizing can take from three to five years before a self-sufficient organization is in place.

All in all, in contrast to the Japanese experience, coastal resource managers in the Philippines and in many other developing countries lack the potentially useful building blocks of customary marine tenure systems and well-developed local norms of fishing behavior as they attempt to institutionalize coastal resource management programs at the community and municipal levels. A critical question, then, for devolution programs, is: under what conditions will collective action emerge and be strong enough to manage coastal fisheries?

In recent years there have been a number of studies—see Ostrom (1990), Wade (1987), Bardhan (1984, chapter 16), Bardhan (1993), Baland and Platteau (1993)—trying to understand the conditions working for and against sustainability of local cooperation in management of common property resources in developing countries. While sociologists and anthropologists look at social norms and codes of conduct in understanding cooperative behavior, economists usually emphasize incentives and penalties. In the literature on repeated prisoners' dilemma games, it is shown that cooperative equilibria can be spontaneously sustained by the long-run interests of foresighted self-interested individuals. The possibility of cooperation depends, of course, on the future pay-offs not being discounted too heavily or the short-run rewards to defection (like stealing water from a common irrigation system) being not too large. The theoretical models point to a potentially large number of equilibrium outcomes, facing which players may use the observed past behavior of others as a guide in their choice.

While factors which include characteristics of the resource or the group of users are useful in identifying circumstances under which cooperative management will work, they are often not factors that are amenable to external influence. There is therefore a question of what can be done to increase the likelihood of cooperation in the context of devolution programs. Here, Gerschenkron's perspective comes into play.

As Gerschenkron (1962) had shown in the context of European industrialization, the absence of traditional "prerequisites," does not represent an insuperable obstacle to development. To start an industrialization drive, one need not necessarily have an agricultural sector capable and willing of delivering the food supplies necessary for urbanization; nor is there likely to be an adequate supply of honest entrepreneurs, an able civil service, or adventurous and forward-looking banks. If they are not already present, these prerequisites will often be generated in the course of development. The important thing is to bolster institutions capable of taking the place of the missing ingredients until they are ready to make their appearance.

In the case of natural resource management, international experience suggests that local capacity for collective action does not come about automatically but requires some impetus (Knox and Meinzen-Dick, 1999). Three critical aspects of capacity of user groups to consider are financing, skills, and linkages to other organizations, i.e. whether there are sufficient financial resources, human resources, and organizational resources. If local organizations are deficient in one or more of these areas, it does not mean that devolution programs cannot proceed, but that other institutions may be called upon to supplement the capacity of the local organizations, at least in the short term. Devolution programs can strengthen the organizational capacity of user groups through use of "institutional organizers" and training in such issues as legal literacy (awareness of regulations), accounting, or how to run a meeting. As with technical training, these support services to strengthen capacity may be provided by the government, NGOs, or the academe. Subsidies or contributions from the local government and NGOs may be helpful in setting up the organization (to reduce the costs of initial organizing). Leaders play a crucial role because they bear a large share of these transaction costs, and can provide a catalytic role in getting others to cooperate. Where local leadership does not emerge spontaneously, trained community organizers can facilitate the process, by explaining the advantages of organizing, providing the initial leadership and identifying others in the community that can take over.

In some cases, government agencies have been charged with organizing user groups. However, conventional bureaucratic approaches and attitudes are often not conducive to encouraging sustained collective action among resource users. A common approach is to work through NGOs to organize user groups. In addition to direct interventions to organize people at the community level, there has been considerable attention to the "enabling environment" (especially the legal framework for local organizations). This has included revising legislation to create legal standing for the organizations, and providing model by-laws and agreements with the government agencies.

The following sections highlight the various levels and scales of coordinating organizations that have been instituted to facilitate coastal fisheries management in Japan and the Philippines and discuss the role of the government and nongovernmental organizations in enhancing the local capacity for collective action in coastal fisheries.

4. Coastal fishery management system in Japan

4.1 Coordinating organizations

The Japanese system begins with well-defined spatial units commonly referred to as Territorial Use Rights Fisheries (TURFs) that clearly delineate spatial zones in

the nearshore coastal environment.¹³ Exclusive access rights within each TURF are managed and coordinated by local Fishery Cooperative Associations (FCAs) that have been historically associated with the coastal zone encompassed within the TURF.

The local FCAs are composed of local fishermen, and are basically established in each fishing community. In order to collectively manage the fisheries within their TURFs, local FCAs have to establish operational regulations that stipulate gear restrictions, as well as closures of the fishing ground (on a seasonal or area basis), etc. Members of FCAs have further subdivided into smaller and more specialized Fishery Management Organizations (FMOs) (Hirasawa et al. 1992; FAO 1993; Hasegawa et al. 1992). FMOs are often formed by a group of fishermen within an FCA, but in some cases they are organized by members from several neighboring FCAs or even from FCAs of several prefectures. FMOs typically manage single species fisheries within the larger TURF. Fisheries managed by FMOs range from sedentary to mobile species, using gear that spans everything from diving to bottom trawls.

The local FCAs are the smallest organizations among various levels and scales of organizations that have been instituted to facilitate coordination of various fishing operations. Table 1 shows the various levels and scales of coordinating organizations that have been instituted.

To sum up current fishery resource management, fishermen self-manage by implementing and enforcing various strategies, generally guided by overarching prefectural- and federal-level constraints and targets. The Fishery Law provides a framework for fishery management, through a system of fishing rights and licenses. In order to coordinate various fishing operations, coordinating organizations with wide-ranging authority and power have emerged. For example, AFCCs can decide on allocation and restrict the applications of fishing rights/licenses using the Fishery Ground Plan and Committee Directions. In addition, a variety of fishing restrictions have been stipulated in prefectural fishery coordinating regulations, FCA regulations and FMO rules. Prefectural fishing regulations broadly stipulate fishing restrictions, in order that the regulations may be applicable throughout the prefecture.

¹³ Fish resources under open access regime are non-excludable by definition of open access and subject to rivalry. This is consistent with the notion that well-defined property rights are lacking in open access fisheries. Such characteristics of fisheries creates incentives to race for fish, which leads to overexploitation of fish resources and over-investment (capital stuffing) in fishing activities and gear, and dissipation of the rents as a result. If one can make the fish resource excludable, then much of the problem is solved. There are several ways to achieve this; one is to completely privatize the resource by means such as fishing quotas. Alternatively, one could set a territorial user rights (TURF) defined over a certain area of the sea and grant it to a group of fishermen and have them manage collectively.

Table 1 Coordinating organizations in Japan

Level	Organization	Function
National level	Fishery Policy Council	The advisory body to the government for national level fishery coordination, design of national fishery policy, etc.
Multijurisdictional level	Wide-Area Fisheries Coordinating Committees (WFCCs)	Coordination of resource use and management of highly migratory species. Also addresses resource restoration plans.
Prefectural level	Area Fishery Coordinating Committees (AFCCs)	Mainly composed of democratically elected fishermen. Coordination through the fishery ground plan, Prefectural Fishery Coordinating Regulations, and Committee Directions.
Local level	Local Fisheries Cooperative Associations (local FCAs)	Composed of local fishermen. They establish operational regulations (FCA regulations) that stipulate gear restrictions, seasonal/area closures of fishing grounds, etc.
More specialized purpose	Fishery Management Organizations (FMOs)	Autonomous body of fishermen. FMO rules are more detailed and more strict than the FCA regulations.

Source: Makino and Matsuda (1995)

FCA regulations stipulate more detailed fishing restrictions, applicable to local conditions. These FCA regulations take into account the restrictions set out in the Prefectural Fishery Coordinating Regulation but include, in addition, some restrictions that have not been stipulated in the prefectural regulations. In the same manner, the FMO rules are even more detailed and yet stricter than the FCA regulations. Therefore, in the current institutional framework, local fishermen themselves manage fishing operations, subject to resource enhancement and conservation of the area. In other words, resource

conservation and enhancement restrain the full exercise of fishery rights and licenses.

The Japanese coastal fisheries are far from being free of conflict. Many of the conflicts stem from internal conflicts over allocation or gear interference. But there are a variety of methods for resolving conflict and diffusing tensions (Short 1989). Local fishing groups have devised a complex of informal or customary rules covering detailed situations about possible interference of nets (Ruddle 1987). These rules are the informal, but iron-clad prescriptions worked out through decades of experience. Consequently, although management regimes involving cooperation or collective action among the individuals are regarded less likely to succeed in general, there are many successful cases of coastal fisheries management in Japan.

The existence of fishery cooperatives and that of fishing rights which FCAs administer is often cited as the main reason for the success of coastal fisheries management in Japan (e.g. Yamamoto, 1995). It should be emphasized however that while the granting of an allocation to a group is a necessary condition for avoiding common property overexploitation and rent dissipation, it is not sufficient. This is because the simple allocation to a group does nothing to eliminate the inherent race to fish incentives faced by the individual members of the closed class. In other words, it is not the mere existence of the FCAs and fishing rights that make successful coastal fisheries management possible. We must focus on why fishing communities in Japan are characterized by a high level of cooperation and how FCAs and fishing rights function and operate so as to facilitate the management of the fishery resources in a collective manner.¹⁴

4.2 Trust, cooperation, and institutions

Although numerous factors have been suggested as important causes of voluntary collective action, one of the most commonly cited is increased social capital. "Social capital" is typically defined as a combination of factors encouraging cooperation among groups with strong social networks, including the development of mutual trust (Putnam 1995). Fukuyama (1995) equates social capital with "trusts" and highlights its role in reducing transactions costs and increasing economic efficiency. Echoing a similar theme, Bowles and Gintis (2002, F419) define social capital as: "trust, concern for one's associates, a willingness to live by the norms of one's community and to punish those who do

¹⁴ The first chapter of Bardhan (2004) discusses the importance of social and political institutions that may correct some of the pervasive coordination failures that afflict an economy at early stages of industrial transformation (and remain important even if property rights were to be made fully secure). Bardhan argues that these coordination mechanisms underemphasized in the institutional economics literature can sometimes be as indispensable as property rights institutions. On the other hand, the literature on natural resource management emphasizes that property rights play a central role in the management of natural resources, conveying authority and shaping the incentives for management. As a result, devolution programs that have not paid sufficient attention to property rights often confront them as a "second generation issue," blocking further progress until they are adequately addressed (Svendsen 1997).

not.” These definitions highlight the role of trust to bind the members of the group/community to cooperate.

Economists are interested in trust because there are strong reasons for believing that without it, economic agents will refrain from engaging in transactions involving certain people, things, or institutions, and mutually beneficial cooperation will go unrealized.¹⁵ Kenneth Arrow (1971, p. 22) writes: “It is useful for individuals to have some trust in each other’s word. In the absence of trust, it would become very costly to arrange for alternative sanctions and guarantees, and many opportunities for mutually beneficial co-operation would have to be foregone.”

Some believe that the capacity to trust is based on deeply rooted cultural traditions and that Japan has a collectivist culture that nurtures high trust. Francis Fukuyama (1995) argues that intrinsic aspects of Japanese culture make the country exhibit high levels of trust, and that these high levels of trust translate into successful national performance. Solow (1995), who is skeptical about the connection between trust and growth in general and Fukuyama’s arguments in particular, appears to accept the assertion that Japan is a high-trust country. In a similar vein, Hagen and Choe (1998) report the “widely held view that Japan is a collectivist culture in the sense that people’s self-identification tends to be deeply rooted in group membership.” This self-identification is thought to promote a greater tendency to trust and cooperate, compared with the “individualist” culture of the United States.

It is clear that decentralized management of the sort seen in coastal fisheries in Japan requires a high degree of cooperation among fishers as there is substantial potential for opportunistic behavior in such relations. Opportunistic behavior here means that fishers take some action that is in their private interest but harms the long-term viability of coastal fishery resources. The evidence suggests that these risks of opportunism among fishers have been minimal, in contrast to coastal fisheries in other countries, where such extensive cooperation is relatively rare. It seems plausible at first glance that this lack of opportunism in cooperative relations is the result of trust (or more precisely trustworthiness) of some kind among members of the cooperative. The fact that the use of pooling arrangements among fishing organization’s members is prevalent in Japan (who in most cases would generate an incentive to shirk¹⁶) invites this kind of interpretation. Consequently, some argue that Japan’s management of its coastal fisheries is nearly unique, and is a kind of historical accident; few if any coastal communities can draw upon medieval practices in gaining the right to management of local resources, as did the Japanese coastal communities after World War II (Weber and Iudicello, 2005).

¹⁵ See the discussion of the social and economic significance of trust in Dasgupta (1988:49-51, 55, 61); Gambetta (1988:217-220).

¹⁶ If one does not receive the fruits of one’s labors, there is an incentive to minimize effort.

But is “trust” the right way to think of the fishing cooperatives’ success? Williamson (1993) argued that psychological and cultural claims may not be irrelevant to commercial transactions, but rarely are they specific enough to tell us the answer to question of interest in our context. Invoking them at the outset tends to crowd out more useful lines of thought. Guinnane (2005) use a concrete set of empirical situations to argue the point made by Williamson (1993) that in commercial or more broadly economic contexts the concept of trust adds nothing that is both useful and new; the useful parts of the idea of trust are implicit in older notions of information and the ability to impose sanctions. The importance of information and enforcement, which is the core of the useful notion of trust, has been recognized in economics for decades. Giving it another name, as Williamson argues, will not accomplish anything.

The literature on Japanese coastal fisheries management often focuses on its advantages, especially in relation to the extent to which communities of fishers implement their own management regimes from the “bottom up” (e.g., Pinkerton and Weinstein 1995; Yamamoto 1995). However, a number of studies also point out problems in intervillage or interinstitution relationships and interpersonal conflicts among the members of an FCA (e.g. Ruddle 1987; Takahashi et al. 2006).¹⁷ Kalland (1995:157-160) notes that during the Tokugawa period, there were many conflicts and rivalries within fishing villages. The four cases discussed by Takahashi et al. (2006) show that Japanese coastal fishers—in the communities studied at least—are not inherently disposed to conservation. They are often eager to catch as much as they can. When they agree on restricting their fishing activities, resource conservation is often secondary to objectives that concern markets, competition, and conflict reduction.

Not surprisingly observed practices suggest that the members of the cooperative do not trust each other in the sense of feeling assured each would do the right thing just because they were good people. Far from a simple reliance on each other’s goodwill, the fishing cooperatives demanded elaborate, formal internal controls. Just as in the very largest organizations of the day, the FMOs use a variety of means to enforce internal decisions that govern the coordination and success of the group operation. The design that is used to manage these functions usually involves schemes that finely prescribe behavior of participants in order to achieve various efficiency and distributional objectives. Some FMOs implement penalties and peer monitoring, while others modify the distribution rules (Ruddle, 1987; Cancino, Uchida and Wilen, 2008).

Since an FCA itself is an institution for collective action with a long historical background, it is not surprising that they have established their own mechanisms of consensus building and handling disputes among fishermen. All in all,

¹⁷ Ruddle (1987) based his study on the Yaeyama archipelago of southwestern Okinawa Prefecture. Takahashi et al. (2006) examined four cases: *hamaguri* clams in Ibaraki Prefecture; abalone in Chiba Prefecture; summer flounder in Kanagawa Prefecture; and sandfish in Akita Prefecture.

monitoring may be achieved literally by peer pressure or there may be a committee of member representatives that undertakes monitoring and enforcement tasks. A common aspect of collective management in Japan involves having a committee decide who is to fish where on a daily, if not on a regular basis. This is done for several reasons. First, it is a means of ensuring more even spatial distribution of effort for each species harvested. It generally involves assignments of fishing places in order to avoid over-harvesting hot spots and allocations of some effort to other spots. The potential fairness problem of being assigned poor areas repeatedly is generally resolved by either rotating harvesting assignments, often in quite intricate patterns, or pooling the proceeds across all participants. Second, in its most refined version, it may involve committee level decisions that trade off harvests of one species against others that may be linked in competing or complementary ways. The movement of animals to different habitats, repopulation programs, the addition of prey species and habitat enhancement activities are all tactics that we would not likely observe in decentralized systems.

None of this sounds like a situation in which everything worked fine because the good folk all shared the same values. In fact, it sounds like the sort of control systems that would make a large modern organization proud – which was precisely what the cooperatives wanted. The external institutional controls are also elaborate. The system decentralizes responsibilities for management to local fishermen organizations, but is constrained by conservation guidelines that are set at the federal level. The federal government sets broad management policies, particularly biologically determined Total Allowable Catches (TACs), some gear prohibitions, minimum size limits, and season length restrictions. The science backing these biologically motivated objectives is partially decentralized to scientists at research stations at the prefecture level (equivalent to states in size). In the Japanese system, local extension scientists play a liaison role between FCAs and the federal government, conducting science that informs setting of TACs and monitoring performance in order to ensure sustainable resource use.

Pointing out these formal controls is not meant to deny that these institutions functioned differently from large formal organizations, and were able to generate cooperation in situations where other organizations could not. But the focus should be on the institutions, and how the institutions induced the behaviors that were needed for success. We could stand back and just say “trust,” but this would teach us little about the FCAs and FMOs, the context, or how coastal fisheries management in Japan works.

5. Devolution of coastal fisheries management in the Philippines

Recognizing the importance of collective action to take over resource management from the state, many devolution programs in the Philippines have devoted considerable attention to group formation. For example, early irrigation

management transfer programs in the Philippines used institutional organizers (Bagadion and Kortan 1991).¹⁸ These staff were charged with presenting the idea of organizing to take over management of irrigation systems (or local sub-systems) to the farmers and assisting them through the process of forming an organization, selecting leaders, developing rules, and initiating the work on the system. However, they were not supposed to dictate on any of these issues, nor to do too much "on behalf of" the farmers. They were thus a supplement to, not a long-term substitute for, the local leadership. The Philippines have regularized such organizers into a department of the National Irrigation Administration.

Another common approach is to work through NGOs to organize user groups.¹⁹ In recent years, a major force that have influenced the development of coastal management in the Philippines (Courtney and White 2000) is a series of donor-assisted nongovernment organization (NGO) and government projects that have resulted in a number of experiments in coastal resource management (CRM), all of which have established marine protected areas of various kinds.²⁰ Such projects, working with coastal communities, have focused on near-shore fisheries and coastal habitat management (Ferrer et al. 1996; White and Lopez 1991; Christie and White 1997). Thus these devolution and community-based resource management and co-management efforts have opened opportunities for the private sector through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and businesses (such as tourism) to play a larger role in the coastal management process at the local level.

In addition to direct interventions to organize people at the community level, there has been considerable attention to policies to create a suitable environment for the organizations. This has included revising legislation to create legal standing for the organizations, and providing model by-laws and agreements with the government agencies. Thus, another major influence affecting the evolution of coastal management in the Philippines is the passage of the 1991 Local Government Code and more recently, the 1998 Fisheries Code, both of which have contributed to the devolution of primary responsibility for coastal resource from central to local governments (municipal, city, and provincial). In particular, the Local Government Code effectively assigned most coastal management authority to over 850 coastal municipalities and cities and 54 coastal provinces

¹⁸ The irrigation sector was the first to evolve an institutional development scheme for mobilizing the active participation of water users in 1968. People-oriented programs in the forestry sector started in the early 1970s (Serna, 1993). Community-based coastal resource management (CBCRM) started in the early 1980s (Pomeroy 2003)

¹⁹ The tempo of political events that followed the restoration of democratic government in 1986 led to an explosion in the number of NGOs in the Philippines, fuelled in part by the huge amounts of foreign aid that flowed into the country to fund reconstruction and to stabilize democratic institutions. Dismayed by the extent of government corruption, donors channeled a considerable proportion of this money through non-government sources (Bankoff, 2007).

²⁰ The share of World Bank projects with some degree of "civil society" involvement (encompassing NGO participation) increased from 6 percent in the late 1980s to over 70 percent in 2006 (World Bank, 1995; 2006). Table 1 of White et al. (2006) lists important projects in the evolution of coastal resource management in the Philippines.

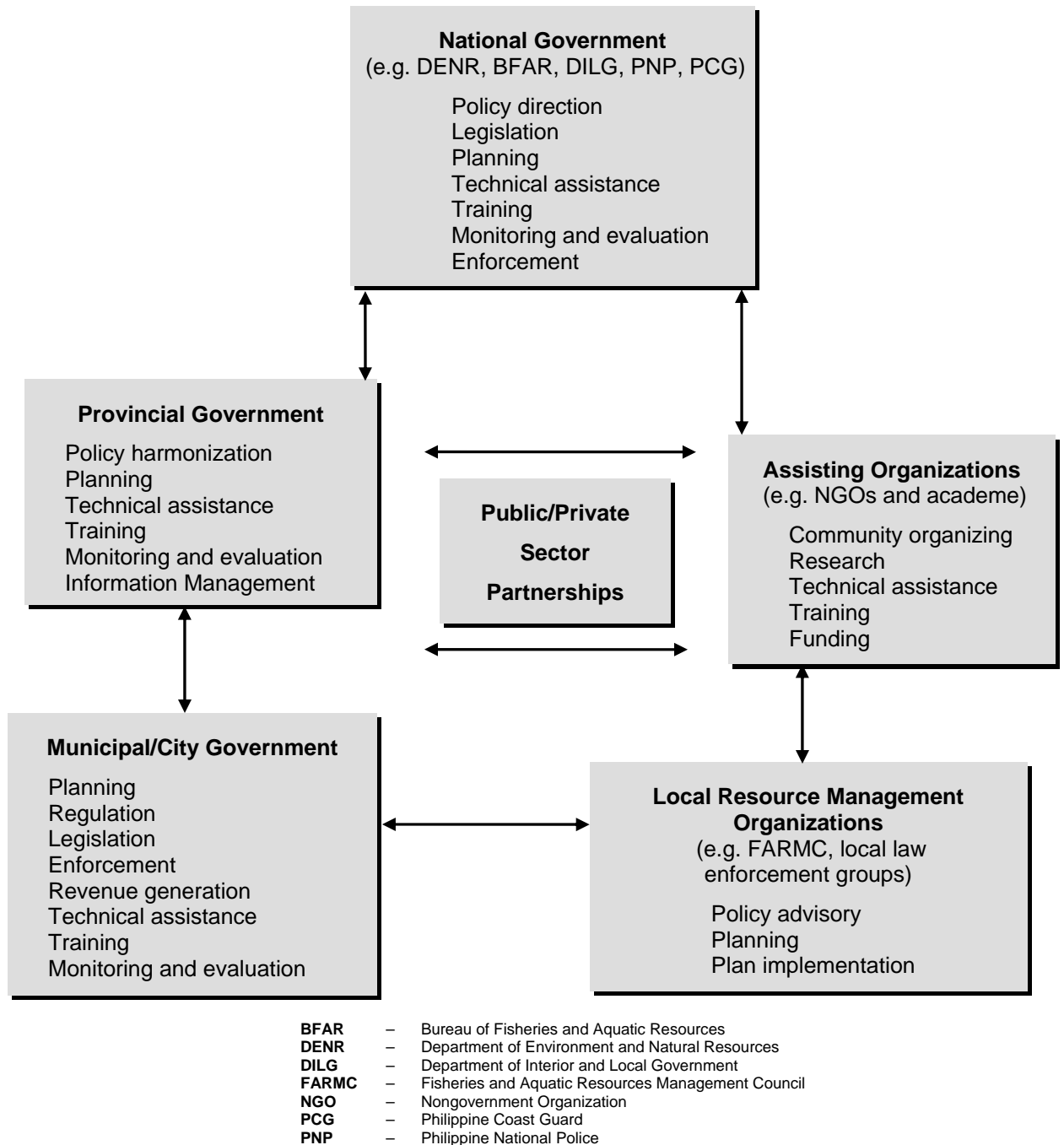
that have jurisdiction in coastal areas. Further, the Fisheries Code of 1998 reinforces the local role by giving local government units (LGUs), specifically, municipalities and cities, authority over municipal waters to 15km offshore. This current legal and policy framework for coastal management creates new institutional roles and responsibilities for national and local governments, nongovernment organizations, academe and people's organizations.

Figure 1 shows the national and local agency roles in coastal management in the Philippines. Municipal and city governments have both executive (Mayor, Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO), Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO), and other staff) and legislative (Vice Mayor, Municipal Council) branches of local government.²¹ Municipal and city governments have the primary responsibility for planning and implementing coastal management programs, including establishing marine protected areas, and enacting and enforcing fishery and coastal resource-related ordinances. Municipal and city governments receive an internal revenue allocation from the national government-based population size, land area, and an equal sharing factor. Provincial government has both executive (Governor, Provincial Planning and Development Office, and other staff) and legislative (Vice Governor, Provincial Council) branches of government. While the role of provincial LGUs under both the Local Government Code and 1998 Fisheries Code is not well defined, many provinces are beginning to fulfill an important coastal management gap to harmonize coastal management policy through the enactment of Provincial Environmental Codes, developing coordinating mechanisms between municipalities, NGOs, and academic institutions, to identify and address coastal management issues, and providing technical and financial assistance to LGUs implementing coastal management. The provincial mandate to directly implement coastal management activities is limited and thus implementation occurs mostly through municipal and city governments.²²

²¹ This and the following paragraphs draw from Lowry et al. (2005) and Pomeroy (2003).

²² A list of coastal management activities delegated to LGUs is outlined in Table 1 of Lowry et al. (2005, p. 318.)

Figure 1. National and local agency roles in coastal management in the Philippines



Source: White et al. (2002).

At the national level, the two principal agencies with coastal management responsibilities are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR). Despite the broad representation of national government agency staff at provincial and municipal levels, coordination between national and local government is weak and major capacity gaps exist.

The 1998 Fisheries Code called for the establishment of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMC) at national and municipal levels. The FARMCs are formed among fisher organizations and cooperatives and NGOs with assistance from the LGU and government agencies. The FARMCs are mandated to carry out a number of management advisory functions in close collaboration with the LGU. These functions include assisting in the preparation of Municipal Fishery Development Plans, recommending the enactments of fishing ordinances, assisting in enforcement, and advising the LGU on fishery matters.

An example can best illustrate the importance of these decentralization activities to co-management in the Philippines. Prior to 1991 and the Local Government Code, an ordinance to provide legally standing for a community-level marine protected area required approval by the secretary of the Department of Agriculture—a long and often unsuccessful procedure. With passage of the Local Government Code, local municipalities had the legal right to approve an ordinance in support of a community-level marine protected area. Local government officials and fisher organizations now had the legal and administrative mandate to work cooperatively on coastal resource management. The establishment of FARMCs under the 1998 Fisheries Code, also strengthened co-management, as fishers now had authority to work cooperatively with the LGU on fisheries planning, management and enforcement.

All in all, coastal management responsibilities of LGUs involving relations with POs and NGOs include (1) promotion of the establishment and operation of POs and NGOs; (2) entry into joint ventures and other cooperative arrangements with POs and NGOs; (3) enactment of appropriate ordinances in consultation with FARMC and in accordance with the National Fisheries Policy; and (4) consultation with FARMCs in the enactment of municipal fisheries. (Lowry, White and Courtney 2005, p. 319).

Although the theoretical advantages of user management have been convincing and the impetus for devolution policies strong, the actual outcomes of devolution of coastal fisheries management in the Philippines have been mixed. The stated objectives of such programs in terms of positive impact on resource productivity, equity among stakeholders, poverty alleviation, and organizational and environmental sustainability are often not met. Resources have not always been used more efficiently than under state management, nor have the benefits been distributed equitably. In some cases the resource base has been depleted.

Experience has shown that the emergence of strong enough local management cannot be automatically assumed.

Moreover, if local governments are being reinvigorated and given expanded powers at the same time that resource user groups are being set up, there may be overlap, confusion, and conflicts regarding the role of each. Competition between individuals or parties for power and patronage may set up rivalries between the leadership in power in the local government and the user groups. The extent of competition and collaboration between these institutions may also vary between communities and over time, depending on who is in power in each type of institution. The incentives for local government and user groups to cooperate with each other seem weakest where the "community" is more ethnically and economically heterogeneous so that the local residents do not share a common interest in the resource. (Sunderlin and Gorospe 1997; Eder, 2005)

It has not been easy for the LGUs to live up to the provisions of all this new legislation in the Philippines. While many mayors have welcomed these new rights, they also realized that they must rely less on the national government for support. Many local governments were not prepared or were unaware of their new roles, limited resources were made available to them from the national government for the transition, and it has taken them awhile to adjust to the new authority that they now have.

Thus the Philippine experience has shown that legislative and bureaucratic reforms, alone, are unlikely to devolve management authority from government agency to the community of resource users. The implications these conclusions have in terms of policy considerations is that policies to invest fishers' organizations with an enhanced role in fisheries management should be integrated within broader policies for institutional reforms, which would conflict with powerful vested interests. Superficial reform programs merely scratch the surface of the problem and could provide a breathing space for officials to avoid economic restructuring which would allow genuine participatory democracy. At the very minimum wider economic improvements and greater social equity would need to precede or accompany regulatory reforms for them to be successful. Such economic improvements might require macroeconomic reforms and an entirely different development strategy. These efforts must be combined with capacity-building and education for all stakeholders.

Two contrasting worldviews coexist in institutional economics; these views are oftentimes labeled "top down" versus "bottom up" (Easterly 2008). The top down view of institutions sees them as determined by laws written by political leaders. The bottom up view sees institutions instead as emerging spontaneously from the social norms, customs, traditions, beliefs, and values of individuals within a society, with the written law only formalizing what is already mainly shaped by the attitudes of individuals.

The top down view of institutions tends to go together with the view that there is one globally unique best set of institutions, toward which all societies are hopefully thought to be “developing.”²³ The bottom up view of institutions is more open to the possibility that societies evolve different institutions even in the long run. Painting these two worldviews as opposing extremes is a caricature—most views lie somewhere in between. The most extreme bottom up view is not tenable, or we would not need formal states and laws at all, whereas in fact they are ubiquitous. Yet the apparent effectiveness of top down formal institutions in Japanese coastal fisheries may still depend on these institutions having evolved from the bottom up. If so, then attempting to introduce formal institutions in the Philippines where bottom up factors are lacking will not replicate the institutional successes of Japan.

Overall, however, those involved in fisheries conservation and management in the Philippines feel that devolution has been a positive step towards sustainable management of fisheries resources in the country (Tagarino, 1995; Fellizar et al., 1997; Courtney, White and Anglo, 2000). Some LGUs have actively engaged in supporting fisher organizations and local management measures. Moreover, new administrative structure has bred success in locations that could not have been reached by national programs.

6. Developing local capacity for collective action in coastal fisheries

The key institutional roles and responsibilities for coastal fisheries management in Japan and the Philippines illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 1, respectively, draw attention to the fact that there are a number of institutional actors involved in coastal fisheries management: government bureaucracies, local government bodies, and the private sector (businesses, academic institutions, and NGOs), as well as user groups. We are unlikely to find a country where the state does not have some control over its natural resources. Even in the case of Japan where the transfer of rights and responsibilities to users is most complete, user groups do not operate in isolation. The government and the private sector (businesses and research institutions) are also important actors on the institutional landscape. Government agencies still provide some technical services, training, rule enforcement and dispute resolution. Moreover, in the Japanese system, financial assistance from the government plays a crucial role in natural resource management particularly in the area of infrastructure. But devolution of natural resource management to user groups involved a change in the role for government agencies, from direct management of the resources to providing a regulatory framework and support services. The “government” includes not only bureaucratic arms of the central government, but also local government bodies.

²³ The top down view is seldom advocated explicitly, but is implicit in the traditional analysis in aid agencies that sees institutions as something the central government must create to make possible the functioning of a market economy.

In Japan where local governments act in tandem with user groups, they provide useful backup, especially to enforce penalties for breaking the laws on resource management. This seems most likely where there is a strong local government and a lack of factionalism within the community. The critical form of participation of user groups is in *decision-making*. User groups are able to set rules, determine sanctions, and make critical decisions about their organizations as well as the management of resources.

In the Philippines, the extent of state control over coastal fisheries appears to be stronger. At the national level, the two principal agencies with coastal management responsibilities are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR). These two agencies have retained authority over some land and water uses, management activities and specific geographic areas and that there is some overlap of responsibilities between the two agencies.²⁴ While national government has devolved significant authority to the local level, national government agencies have maintained significant institutional presence especially at the regional, provincial, and in the case of one agency, municipal level. DA-BFAR and DENR have offices and staff at regional (multiple provinces) and provincial levels. The DENR has staff responsible for covering jurisdictional responsibilities in multiple municipalities. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) is the primary national government agency responsible for overseeing, monitoring, and evaluating LGUs and the devolution process. Every municipality has one staff assigned from DILG.

The decentralization program in the Philippines, despite claiming participatory decentralization, has devolved limited property rights to the local resource users. In the Philippines, municipal government (rather than local fishing organization) authority over local fishing grounds dates back to the colonial period (Pomeroy 2003). Thus, in contrast to the Japanese experience, the institutions, both old and new, that figure prominently in Philippine coastal fisheries management are largely of the more formal, governmental sort.²⁵ Moreover, external change agent,²⁶ such as a non-governmental organization (NGO), has a much more pervasive role in community organizing and development of institutional arrangements.

Recent researches have highlighted the perils of “municipalization” and “NGO-ization” of natural resource management projects in developing countries. For example, Wittman and Geisler (2005) offer a case in which local capacity for

²⁴ See Table 2 of Lowry et al. (2005, p. 319).

²⁵ Likewise, based on a study of policy discussions and administrative procedures surrounding community-based forestry in the Philippines, Gauld (2000) reveals the apparent transition in forest policy from top-down towards community-based forestry is not reflected in the way in which community-based forestry is discussed and operationalized by policy makers. Firstly, strong state control over forest management is understood as being a necessary feature of community-based forest policy.

²⁶ While significant funding comes from major Western donors, *external* is meant to imply external to the community, in many cases originating from urban-based, predominantly middle-class, professionals.

resource management in Guatemala's western highlands is being lost through a state-led management program cloaked in the rhetoric of decentralization. They argue that given the history of Guatemalan municipalities and rural indigenous communities dating back to the colonial era, this may be the premeditated result of recent negotiations calling for “municipalization” of natural resource management. On the other hand, some researches point out some of the long-term consequences of donor-sponsored “NGO-ization” (Hearn 1998) of different spheres of society. In particular, Buckland (1998) argued that in the case of Bangladesh, the majority of NGOs have opted for the minimalist notion of participation, seeking beneficiary input and assistance in implementing projects that are largely designed, funded, and managed externally.²⁷ This approach has failed to sufficiently mobilize indigenous social and political capital that would build, or rebuild, community capacity and ensure sustainability of impact.

In the case of the Philippines, Eder (2005) notes that because the official mandate was to institutionalize coastal resource management at the municipal level of government and a typical coastal resource management project works directly or (through the apparatus of the municipal government) indirectly with communities of both kinds, “community participation” was ultimately assimilated to the barangay-municipality-state political grid—i.e., to the grid of government-mandated territorial communities. Eder notes further that a Philippine municipality is a unit of local government and inexorably part of the state—and hence should not be too easily imagined as having sufficient autonomy so as to “cooperate” with, much less bargain with, the state. In many ways a municipality functions as a kind of mini-state, with (among other things) the municipal mayor in command of an extensive system of patronage. It should also be noted that in the Philippines the local political elite are an important actor in coastal resource management.

Moreover, the Community-Based Coastal Resource Management Resource Center (2001) pointed out that one important obstacle to community-based fisheries management in the Philippines is dependency of initiatives upon NGOs. Reviews of several projects in the Philippines found that communities sometimes viewed NGOs largely as a source of short-term income. Once funding ran out and NGOs left, community-based fisheries management initiatives collapsed (CBCRM Resource Center 2001). In a similar vein, Eder (2005) notes that coastal resource management-involved NGOs, despite anti-establishment rhetoric, may display an inclination to work within existing institutional structures, in part perhaps to seek legitimization within those structures. Eder mentions a UNDP-funded NGO working in Palawan’s Honda Bay that helped set up formal “fish sanctuary management boards” whose membership consisted of a virtual roll call of established political and social groupings in rural Philippines. Such arrangements seem guaranteed to ensure that the existing institutional inequities in wider Philippine society will continue to be projected on to local developments.

²⁷ While significant funding comes from major northern donors, *external* is meant to imply external to the community, in many cases originating from urban-based, predominantly middle-class, professionals.

Thus contrary to an idealized view accrediting everything that is local with naturally democratic qualities, communities or municipalities may be more vulnerable to capture by local elites because local power groups can easily collude beyond the control of higher-level institutions and the attention of the media. In the words of Bardhan (2002:192):

Political accountability in poor countries is particularly affected by the likelihood of corruption or capture by interest groups. While local governments may have better local information and accountability pressure, they may be more vulnerable to capture by local elites, who will then receive a disproportionate share of spending on public goods.

Moreover, the romantic view of NGOs as organizations committed to “doing good,” while setting aside profit or politics (Zivetz, 1991; Fisher, 1993) is too starry-eyed. As (Werker and Faisal 2008, p. 77) has argued:

...both the strengths of NGOs and their weaknesses easily fit into the economists' conceptualization of not-for-profit contractors. As with many nonprofits, it is easy to conjure up a glowing vision of how these efforts could focus on problem solving without getting bogged down in corruption or bureaucracy. Yet the strengths of the NGO model also produce corresponding weaknesses in agenda setting, decision making, and resource allocation.

Observations such as these led some researchers to state that “decentralization-as-municipalization” and “NGO-ization” put at risk and even weaken successful village-level natural resource governance structures and local livelihoods (Wittman 2005) and therefore argue for the implementation of devolution programs to be carried out on the local community level, rather than the municipal level, where the full participation of community members is often ignored or overlooked (Prill-Brett 1997), and to be wary of engaging external change agents.

It is our view that in general the role of the local government and external change agents in the early stages of natural resource management devolution in developing countries should not be dismissed much too easily. To be sure policymakers need to be mindful of the perils of “municipalization” and “NGO-ization” of natural resource management, but the issue can be brought to better perspective when we consider constraints and alternatives.

A fundamental idea underlying community-based natural resource management is that it should be “building from below” and that it should come into existence through the voluntary participation and cooperation of the local population. To put it briefly, the local population should be made to feel that the coastal resource management plan is theirs and that they should join together and make united efforts to ensure its success. The criticism of previous attempts to promote coastal development was largely directed against the alleged unwillingness or inability of the government to enlist the wholehearted participation of the people

in coastal areas. A community-based approach, it was felt, would steer a new course.

Hence the dilemma. Gunnar Myrdal (1968) notes that the right of workers and peasants in Western Europe to have a right to have a say in state policymaking had to be fought for through many decades, and that struggle, in turn, was a continuation of centuries of striving by better situated groups to establish their right to have a voice in governmental councils. In the face of increasingly organized and effective pressures from below, the privileged classes gradually had to concede an enlargement of membership in governmental councils. The ultimate arrival of universal suffrage was a triumph for education, popular agitation, and initiative. In West European countries, Myrdal notes further, the protracted and ultimately successful struggle for decision-making gradually brought about a considerable identification of the people with the nation-state and their respective communities.

But, as pointed out by Myrdal (1968), voluntary participation did not emerge spontaneously in stagnant villages of South Asia as it did in Western Europe; it needed to be fostered and directed by the government. Under conditions of illiteracy, poverty and backwardness which obtain in rural communities, it is of the utmost importance to realize that the object in view cannot be achieved unless the central and local government as well as external change agents effectively intervenes to help in the creation of the local leadership and to help in the strengthening of local management institutions.

A study of one coastal resource management project jointly sponsored by USAID and the Philippine government (Sunderlin and Gorospe 1997) concluded that local stratification (among other things) undermined a rather substantial fisheries co-management initiative in San Miguel Bay. More generally, a recent review of experience to date in the Philippines and elsewhere with community-based marine protected areas (often the centerpiece of co-managed coastal resource management projects) found that poverty hinder implementation of the broader management policies needed for community-level initiatives to succeed (Christie et al., 2003, p. 23). For these and other reasons, White et al. (2002, p. 22) emphasize that in the Philippines, in addition to local communities and other stakeholders, "local municipal governments must play a key role from the beginning" if coastal resource management projects are to be more effective than they are at present.

It is often pointed out that government resource managers are reluctant to share authority. However, it would be a mistake to interpret this solely as a self-serving motive to hang onto political power. Many managers have well-considered reasons to be skeptical about local-level management. Managers' reasons for skepticism include the lack of appropriate knowledge and know-how on the part of the fishers, and the ability of fishers to organize themselves to manage for long-term sustainability. Each of these points opens up its own debate. Even in

countries with high standards of education, it is true that fishers tend to have lower levels of education than the general population. But the relevant knowledge held by fishers in many areas of the world may be extremely detailed and relevant for resource management (Johannes, 1981; Freeman et al., 1991; Berkes et al., 1995). Indeed, it is the complementarity between such local knowledge and scientific knowledge that makes co-management stronger than either community-based management or centralized management.

Experience from the Philippines, the country with the greatest number of fisheries community-based management and co-management projects in the world, has shown that fishers have difficulty in organizing themselves for collective action. In reviewing the Philippine projects it was found that fishers often recognize that a problem exists, they will discuss the situation among themselves, and they will discuss possible solutions to the problem, but very few groups of fishers will take action to either formally organize themselves or to develop institutional arrangements (rights and rules). The review found that in less than 20 percent of the cases did the fishers take action on their own initiative to organize and develop institutional arrangements (Carlos and Pomeroy, 1996). Leadership seems to be the limiting factor for fishers to take collective action. Either no individual is willing to step forward to lead, there is no one in the community with enough credibility among the fishers to lead, or divisions within the community or group of resource users will not allow for a leader to emerge. If enough initiative exists among the fishers they may approach a supportive politician or government official and ask for assistance or they may contact an external change agent, such as a non-governmental organization (NGO), academic or research institution, to assist in community organizing and development of institutional arrangements.

In addition, not all groups of fishers have appropriate local institutions; in such cases, any co-management initiative will necessarily start with institution-building. But institution-building is a long-term and costly process. Community organizing can take from three to five years before a self-sufficient organization is in place, on the basis of cases in the Philippines (Carlos and Pomeroy, 1996). Thus, one role of government in establishing conditions for co-management is the creation of legitimacy and accountability for the local organization and institutional arrangements. The government, through legislative and policy instruments, defines power sharing and decision-making arrangements. Only government can legally establish and defend user rights and security of tenure. Government is ultimately accountable for all actions undertaken through co-management.

7. Concluding remarks and the research challenge

The literature have documented several downsides to “municipalization” and “NGO-ization” of natural resource management. The arguments regarding the perils of “municipalization” and “NGO-ization” of natural resource management appear plausible, and policymakers need to be mindful of such perils. But the

issue is brought to better perspective when we consider constraints and alternatives and when we show respect for the historical evolution that has somehow yielded today's institutional arrangements. This is not to advocate the extreme view that "what is, is right," only the more modest view that "what is, is for a reason."

A clear message that derives from Gerschenkron and does still appear to be valid is that backwardness entailed the absence of factors that served as preconditions for development in more advanced countries and it is important to examine the ways in which, in conditions of backwardness, substitutions for the absent factors were achieved. Transporting Gerschenkron's insight into natural resource management, this paper suggests that the patterns of substitution for alleged prerequisites for successful coastal fisheries management in the Philippines could be understood as responses to relative backwardness at the start of efforts to devolve coastal fisheries management. It may be that the style, stage and level of late development has led to high reliance on local government units and NGOs as developing countries imitate more developed countries and attempt to implement "community-based fisheries management" established by the now developed countries. In conditions of relative backwardness and in the absence of potentially useful traditional fishing rights and village-based management systems and the fact that fishers have difficulty in organizing themselves for collective action, the Philippine government devolved to local government units authority over local fishing grounds and contracted out external change agent, such as NGOs to assist in community organizing and development of institutional arrangements. The prominence of local government units and NGOs is essentially a result of certain phases of economic backwardness, that such prominence was to a much lesser degree in the well-established Japanese coastal fisheries management system, and that it was to a higher degree in more backward Philippines.

Thus it remains important to bolster institutions capable of taking the place of the missing ingredients until they are ready to make their appearance. In particular it is important to bolster the capabilities of existing local-level organizations: for the local government units to live up to the provisions of the Local Government Code and the Fisheries Code and for the NGOs and other external change agents to be able to organize people at the community level and develop suitable institutional arrangements.

The literature has documented a variety of capacity building problems that persist despite substantial capacity building efforts, particularly by donor agencies, academic institutions and NGOs.²⁸ While much has been learned regarding the causes and conditions under which devolution of natural resource management to local governments and development of the NGO sector are encouraged or constrained, much remains to be learned about local government-NGO interactions in the context of natural resource management. As local

²⁸ See, for example, Pomeroy (2003) and Lowry et al. (2005).

governments and community NGOs strengthen their capacities and as they increasingly cross paths, it is useful to devote more attention to when and how local governments and nongovernmental organizations interact with each other, and to isolate the individual and mutual contributions they make to the social, political, and economic development of their communities.

A number of research questions are worth pursuing: How do decentralization and the strengthening of the NGO sector affect local government-NGO interactions? How well-developed does each sector need to be for successful collaboration? What conditions create conflict and obstacles for collaborative relations between NGOs and local government? In what circumstances are the LGUs or BFAR involved in enforcement? What sorts of institutional development activities have been the focus of government and NGO engagement? What sorts of government and NGO engagement is regarded as most effective in different contexts? Why?

A beginning point for the investigation would be systematic analysis of existing literature, particularly case studies of devolution of natural resource management, NGO sector performance, and interactions between the local government and NGOs. Mining the literature could yield data and information that might allow testing the hypotheses.

Another method would be to conduct new case studies. Comparative case studies among nations would give a broad perspective on historical, cultural, economic, legal, and political conditions that mold the social functions of NGOs and local governments and affect their interactions. Comparative case studies within one country would also inform this research, helping to document causes of variations in NGO-local government interactions in settings where legal and political conditions are similar.

In the absence of detailed and relevant data across a number of countries, we may have to often resort to general qualitative comparative-historical analysis of the coastal fisheries management process in order to understand the impact of institutional arrangements, and present paper is in that mode. Comparative-historical analysis at most gives us some general insights into the mechanisms and processes involved, but does not clinch issues in terms of quantification or allow us to control for other factors that may be simultaneously impinging on the variable in question or sort out the endogeneity or reverse causality issues. For quite a long time this method has been used, with full consciousness of its limitations, and the conflicting issues regarding the impact of institutional arrangements will not be resolved until much more detailed datasets particularly involving panels within at least some major countries become available.

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